

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 24, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Nishizato '887 (U.S. Patent No. 5,440,887). The Examiner also indicated that claims 1-23 are allowed.

Applicants disagree with the Examiner's §102(b) rejection of claim 24. However, solely in an effort to expedite the examination of the present application, by this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claim 24.

As such, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1-23 are currently presented for examination of which, as indicated by the Examiner, are allowed.

All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants submit that the entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116, as the claim changes: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not require any further consideration or searches as the claim changes *merely cancel the only rejected claim*; and (c) places the application in better form for an Appeal, should an Appeal be necessary.

Applicants' Representative remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the Undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number **03-3975**.

The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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